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ENG 4300-4390-002-098: Being a Daughter, Being a Son: Age, Race, and Gender at the Generational Divide

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4300-002
4390-098

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Office Hours:
TTH 8:30-9:30 &
11-12:00 (and
by appointment)

**Spring 2012: English 4300—002/4390--098
(TTH 12:30-1:45 Coleman Hall 3159)**

Being a Daughter, Being a Son: Age, Race, and Gender at the Generational Divide

This senior seminar is an opportunity to bring together much of what you have learned as an English major—the theory and the practice of it all—in the study of a focused topic. Together we will consider how, why, and with what results writers have turned to literature to celebrate, challenge and explore the experience of being a daughter or being a son. We'll read across genres (short stories, novels, graphic novels, diaries, memoirs, autobiographies), looking into the many ways in which this fundamental human experience plays out within individual and collective memory, across differences of time, space, class, religion, and nationality--and most especially on the borders of age, race, and gender.

Texts:

- Bryson, *The Life and Times of the Thunderbolt Kid*
- Walls, *The Glass Castle*
- Min, *Secondhand World*
- Wolff, *This Boy's Life*
- Walker, *The Color Purple*
- Spiegelman, *Maus and Maus II*
- Bechdel, *Fun Home*
- Alexie, *Smoke Signals*

Course requirements and grading:

1. Grades:

- Class participation, in-class discovery writing, and class discussion responsibilities (15%)
- Two short papers (15% each): Select from Bryson, Walls, Min, Wolff, and Walker readings; each is due one week after we complete the work and should be at least a 750 word exploration of a specific thematic or genre-related question that emerges from your reading of the novel in relationship, a question clearly related to the class theme; focus narrowly and provide specific support from the text with in-text citation; these should be original readings and not involve research or outside criticism.
- Final paper – a researched essay of 10 to 12 pages (excluding the Works Cited page) based on one of the short papers and employing a clear critical lens (meet with me before spring break if you would like to discuss a pedagogy-based option); clear your final topic with me (in the form of a one to two page proposal) and provide me with a working bibliography by March 29th; the paper will be due April 24th (please provide Xeroxed copies of all pages/sources cited in the paper with the paraphrased or quoted material highlighted) (35%)
- Final exam (20%)

2. Writing Guidelines:

- All out-of-class assignments should be typed, use MLA style internal citations, and include a Works Cited page. If you have any questions about this format, please see me or visit the Writing Center or the OWL website. In addition, please turn in all essays on the assigned dates. *Unless we have made other arrangements, a late assignment will be graded down a half letter grade per class hour it is late.*
- Plagiarism: Respect for other writers' words and ideas is a core value in our community. We'll discuss intellectual honesty and strategies for achieving it, but here is the official English Department policy that we will follow:
Any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism—"The appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and/or thoughts of another author, and representation of them as one's original work" (*Random House Dictionary of the English Language*)—has the right and the responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty, up to and including immediate assignments of a grade of F for the assigned essay and a grade of F for the course, and to report the incident to the Judicial Affairs Office. Respect for the work of others should encompass all formats, including print, electronic, and oral sources.

Ethical research writing includes having mastery of distinctions between summary, paraphrase, and quotation (including all appropriate punctuation to distinguish these forms); it also requires providing complete and accurate in-text citations for any ideas as well as language (exact unique words or phrases, sentences, and extended passages) taken from any source (oral, print, or electronic), as well as corresponding Works Cited entries. The MLA style sheet examples offered on the OWL website will be our final authority on appropriate form: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>. Note that it offers updates on the newest 2009 MLA rules. See p. 16 + in the English Department Field Guide to Writing for additional information:
<http://castle.eiu.edu/~english/student/documents/handbook.pdf>

3. Attendance and Class Participation: Being in class is essential to our collective success as a class, as well as to becoming a better, more able, and responsible reader, writer, and collaborator—this includes being fully prepared (actively reading assignments--annotating, taking notes, preparing substantive questions—and completing all writing assignments) and taking a responsible and active part in class discussions and group tasks (being alert, involved, respectful, tactful, and courteous). Taking part in discussion might include asking well-informed questions based on close and critical reading of assignments, responding to questions, and entering into general discussions. Also, please be on time (if you arrive after attendance is taken, it is your responsibility to see that I mark you present); turn your cell phones to vibrate and use only for emergencies; bring the text/s of the day to class; and only pack up after class discussion concludes. In general, if you have a problem, send me an e-mail or come to my office to see me as soon as possible. **More than three unexcused absences will lower your class participation grade to an F.** As outlined in the student catalogue, I will consider an absence excused only for "reasons of illness, emergency, or university activity." It is your responsibility to provide me with appropriate documentation for any absence.
4. Disabilities: If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Coordinator of the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible.
5. Office Hours: Please feel free to drop in during my scheduled hours--or to request an appointment. Really. I mean it. I enjoy meeting with you and find that those who visit and take this opportunity to pursue ideas or clear up problems generally do much better in the class. If you have questions, be sure to ask them--in class or after. Chances are that if you have a question, someone else has the same question.

Electronic Writing Portfolio

English 4300 is a writing-intensive course. If you plan to use the formal essay for your Electronic Writing Portfolio (EWP), please talk with me by midterm. Seniors graduating this term should be aware of an early deadline for final semester submissions. We will need to make special arrangements for your essay due dates. Additional information and forms are available at www.eiu.edu/~assess/ewpmain.php.

Research and writing resources:

- <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>
- <http://www.bartleby.com/>
- http://castle.eiu.edu/~english/student/documents/Field_Guide_to_Writing_2006.pdf

English 4300/4390: Getting Started (DUE TO ME BY 5 P.M. on January 13th)

Using the email account you check most regularly, please send me an email message (lscoleman@eiu.edu) with the following information:

- Your name, course and section number, major, minor (if any), home and school addresses and phone numbers (including cell if that is what you use most often).
- Your personal, professional, and content goals for English 4300. I'd also like to know what part you see this course playing in your senior experience—e.g., how do you see your experience as a reader and writer in the major contributing to your approach to this class?
- An acknowledgement of having read and agreed to the policies in the course syllabus.

If you have any questions, please feel free to ask them in the email, in class, or after class.

Plan to check this account on a regular basis.

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Week 1 (January 10 & 12)

T: Introductions; assign introductory email
Th: Bryson to p. 45 [Introductory email due by 1/13/12 at 5 p.m.]

Week 2 (January 17 & 19)

T: Bryson 46-104, 169-203, 259-68
Th: Walls

Week 3 (January 24 & 226)

T & Th: Walls continued

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English 4300/4390 Syllabus Part II

Week 4 (January 31 & February 2)

T: Min
Th: Min

Week 5 (February 7 & 9)

T: Min
Th: Allison (from *Two or Three Things I Know For Sure*--e-reserves)

Week 6 (February 14 & 16)

T: Wolff
Th: Wolff

Week 7 (February 21 & 23)

T: Wolff
Th: Wolff

Week 8 (February 28 & March 1)

T: Walker
Th: Walker

Week 9 (March 6 & 8)

T: Walker
Th: Gay (from *Ayiti*--e-reserves)